



Ice Floe Aesthetics

Forming near the mouth of Amur River in Siberia, every year the ice floes travel the 1,000-kilometer journey across the Sea of Okhotsk to reach the coast of Hokkaido in late January. Once the surface is covered with ice, waves disappear and the roar of the sea is no longer heard — silence reigns supreme. But even after this transformation, strong winds bring groaning sounds from the tranquil sea as ice floes grind against each other. This kind of mystical drama unfolds from late March into April until the floes melt away and eventually disappear from sight.



PHOTO: KATSUNORI SEKI

LEFT: Ice floes from the distant coasts of Siberia arrive in the waters off Hokkaido. • ABOVE: A diver five meters under the ice floes.

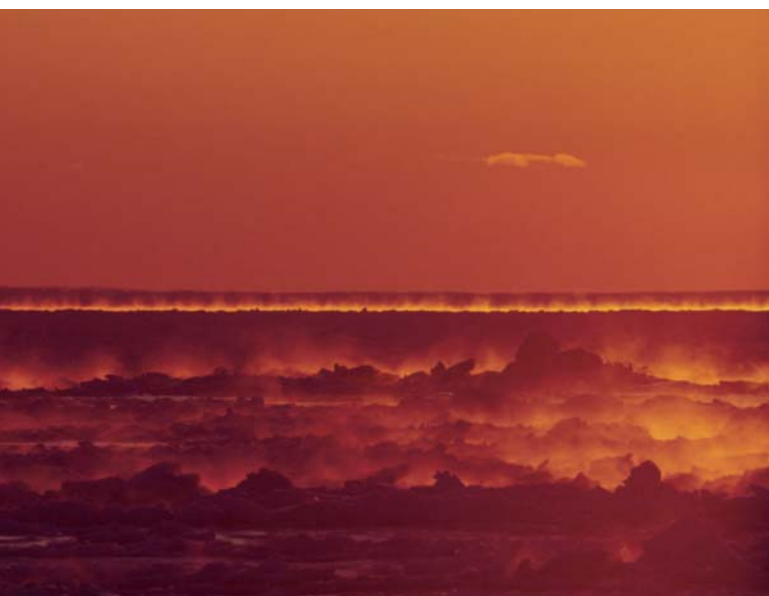


PHOTO: TOMOKAZU YAMADA





PHOTO: MASAOKI TANAKA



PHOTO: AKINARI OKUYAMA

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TOP LEFT: The Sea of Okhotsk assumes a solemn air in February with the arrival of the ice floes.

FAR LEFT: Ice floes glimmer beneath the morning sun.

LEFT: Looking up at the sky from under the ice floes. The water temperature is zero degrees.

TOP RIGHT: A baby spotted seal relaxes on the ice floes. These seals are born on the ice from March into April.

RIGHT: Tourists enjoy a sightseeing cruise through the ice floes on the Garinko-go, which is specially designed to plow through the ice.



PHOTO: MASAOKI TANAKA